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### UM library receives McGowan papers, including history of Plains, Montana

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UM LIBRARY RECEIVES  
McGOWAN PAPERS, INCLUDING  
HISTORY OF PLAINS, MONT.

MISSOULA--

The University of Montana Library Archives recently received 100 volumes of the "McGowen Commercial Company Papers," consisting of ledgers and journals of a general merchandise establishment at Plains.

Dale L. Johnson, UM Library archivist, said that students and researchers interested in local or community history may find valuable material in the papers. The volumes contain a history of the western Montana town of Plains and information concerning its founder, Col. James A. McGowan.

The town was originally founded in "Wild Horse Plains" valley, where McGowan opened a small store in 1884. He is described as the "first man to turn a sod in the valley, and the first to raise a crop."

His enthusiasm was so great, the papers said, that he influenced others "with considerable ease" to settle in the valley.

At the time of his death in 1911, McGowan had expanded his interests to include ownership of the Plains newspaper, "The Plainsman," the controlling interest in the McGowan Commercial Company, the electric light and heating plant, the Plains Water Company, and he was president of the First National Bank of Plains.

The McGowan papers were given to the UM Library by the McGowan Commercial Company, Plains.

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